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THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The apparently deleterious effect of the large local pelican population upon the fish supply of Pyramid Lake, Nevada, was the subject of an editorial note in *THE CONDOR* for September, 1917 (vol. xix, p. 171). It was suggested that in the event of the more extensive employment of the fishes of this lake for human food, the pelicans might have to be materially reduced in number as an economic measure. In a recent paper by Professor John O. Snyder (Bull. U. S. Bureau Fisheries, vol. xxxv, pp. 33-86, pls. 3-5) dealing exhaustively with the fishes of the Lahontan basin, in Nevada and northeastern California, the belief is expressed that practically the only harm done by the pelicans is in consuming fishes that, though of no direct importance to man, might be available as food for the really valuable trout. It is further suggested, however, that the extensive capture of the trout by man has resulted in a suberabundance of minnows and suckers. As long as these latter are

not sought after by man, the pelicans cannot fairly be considered as interfering with his interests.

The annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union was held at Cambridge, Mass., November 12-16, 1917. The election of officers resulted in two notable changes. Mr. John H. Sage, who for so many years has borne the burden of the secretaryship of the Union, was elected president, while Dr. T. S. Palmer becomes secretary. Mr. H. W. Henshaw and Dr. Witmer Stone were re-elected as vice-presidents, and Dr. Jonathan Dwight, treasurer.

The single vacancy in the list of Fellows was filled by the election of P. A. Taverner. R. H. Beck, W. S. Brooks, James P. Chapin, Francis Harper, and Winsor M. Tyler were elected members.

The public meetings were held at the Museum of Comparative Zoology. The papers presented comprised a varied program, treating of birds of several remote parts of the world, and of many diverse phases of ornithological study. Some contrasting titles are afforded by the following: A Purple Martin Roost in the City of Washington, by H. C. Oberholser; "Sight Records"—a Problem of Present-day Ornithology, by Witmer Stone; The Span of Life and Period of Activity of Ornithologists, by T. S. Palmer; An Ornithological Journey from the Tableland to the Tropics in Peru, by Frank M. Chapman; Tail Feathers and their Upper Covers, by Hubert L. Clark; and The Future of the Federal Bird Reservations, by George W. Field.

On September 23, 1917, there occurred the death of Henry Reed Taylor, after an illness extending over eleven years. Cooper Club members need no reminder of the scope of Mr. Taylor's activities at the time of the founding of the Club and for some years thereafter, of his boundless enthusiasm as a collector, and of the energy and ability he displayed as founder and editor of *The Nidologist*. His magazine during the entire period of its existence (1893 to 1897) served as medium of publication for the minutes of Cooper Club meetings, as well as for the writings of many individual members of the Club. Mr. Taylor's name is altogether so strongly bound up with the Club's inception, as well as with those first several years when its continuance as a society was due only to the constant efforts of a few individuals, that the unhappy circumstances attending his last years call for our deepest commiseration.

Cooper Club members will learn with deep regret of the death of Mr. Lyman Beld-

ing in November, 1917. As recently pointed out by Dr. T. S. Palmer (CONDOR, xix, Sept. 1917, p. 166), Mr. Belding had attained a greater age than any other American ornithologist, but it was with ironic swiftness that his death followed this congratulatory comment. An account of Mr. Belding's life and his ornithological work will be published in THE CONDOR.

Mr. John Lewis Childs has recently published in attractive form a catalog of his library of North American natural history. Ornithology alone comprises no less than thirty-five pages of titles. Among these we note the presence of many complete sets of periodicals now rare, and of many scarce volumes—comprising what certainly must be one of the few large private libraries in the United States.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

REPORT ON FIELD-WORK IN OKANAGAN AND SHUSWAP DISTRICTS, 1916. By J. A. MUNRO. (Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History for the year 1916, Victoria, British Columbia, March, 1917, pp. 12-18.)

During the summer of 1916 field work was carried on by the Provincial Museum in the Okanagan and Shuswap districts of southern British Columbia. This report gives brief statements of conditions at the several points visited (Nahun Plateau, Swan Lake, Shuswap District, and Kettle River District), with lists of the birds found breeding at each place. Following the summary of the season's work is a briefly annotated list covering "some of the ornithological notes made during the past two years", presumably from the same general region, though in many cases no localities are given for the species mentioned.

The locality lists include a variety of species and subspecies that is probably indicative of the diversified nature of the regions explored, forms elsewhere representative of different life zones and faunal areas being listed side by side. In some cases there is probable misidentification of closely related subspecies, and, indeed, we gather from the context that certain determinations are merely tentative; but, even making such allowances, the collections give evidence of the complex nature of the fauna of the region, one worthy of the most careful scrutiny by the favorably situated student of geographical distribution.—H. S. SWARTH.

THE BIRD STUDY BOOK by T. GILBERT PEARSON | Secretary, National Association | of Audubon Societies | [Vignette] | Colored frontispiece | Pen and ink drawings by | Will Simmons | and sixteen photographs | Garden City New York | Doubleday, Page & Company | 1917 (our copy received March 22); 258 pp., illus. (as above). Price \$1.25.

A list of the headings for the twelve chapters which this book contains will serve to convey a fair idea of its contents. These titles are: First acquaintance with the birds; the life about the nest; domestic life of the birds; the migration of birds; birds in winter; the economic value of birds; civilization's effect on the bird supply; the traffic in feathers; bird protective laws and their enforcement . . . how laws are made; bird reservations; making bird sanctuaries; teaching bird study.

Because of Mr. Pearson's long connection with the National Association of Audubon Societies it is only natural that his greatest interest lies in the educational and economic value of birds and in the subject of their protection rather than in the scientific aspects of ornithology. The Bird Study Book thus reflects the "Audubon attitude" in marked degree.

There is much that is stimulating in the pages of this book and it is written for the most part in entertaining style. Yet the reviewer has found it disappointing where it might have been most helpful. It is obvious that the facts set forth have been gathered from a variety of sources and are in but small part the results of the author's own study. Yet in many cases no clew whatever is given as to the source of quoted information. While in other instances, as in the list of numbers of birds recorded from the different states, though author and year are given [for example: "Alabama, 275 (Oberholser, 1909)"], there is no way by which the reader can locate the citation.

The book under consideration will be prized by the reader for whom it is intended, by reason of the number and interest of the facts it sets forth, but not for its literary qualities. This last comment will be understood by examining the following sample paragraph (p. 166): "The call for feather finery rings so loudly in the hearts of women that it will probably never cease to be heard, and it is the Ostrich—the big, ungainly yet graceful Ostrich—which must supply the demand for high-grade feathers of the future" [!].—H. W. GRINNELL.